

By the Author of "Well of Gold," "Christabel," Etc.

A HOME ON THE RANGE

by BENTLEY RIDGE

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CAPTAIN DAINTRY: An Englishman, forced by business difficulties to emigrate with his family to New Zealand. MYRLE DAINTRY: His daughter, a modern young girl, who discovers a new way of living—and loving—in the wilds of the new country. REX WILDE: A gay, wealthy, irresponsible young man, whom Myrle promises to marry. GEORGE TELFORTH: A young but sullen and secretive widower, who loves Myrle but who is already engaged to be married.

CHAPTER VII—(Continued) JEALOUSY—TRAGEDY "Rex is very good!" Myrle repeated breathlessly. Telforth must be made to admit it, to give Rex his due. "Of course," said Telforth again. "And also exceedingly well endowed with this worldly goods. What more can any woman want?" They stood there, Myrle white and Telforth red, too engrossed to be aware of the others coming up behind them. "I suppose you mean to insinuate that I only care about Rex for his money," said Myrle, very quietly. "I'd be very rude if I were to do that," returned Telforth. "A woman who could attack a problem like 'Petersdown' with the pluck you showed would hardly be likely to snatch at such a solution to things." Myrle threw discretion and dissimulation to the winds. "If I am marrying Rex for what he can give—" she began, but words failed her. She swallowed hard and began again, shaking with anger. "Is it any worse for a woman to marry for comfort and security than for a man to marry a woman because he needs a housekeeper? Someone to darn his socks and cook his meals, and wash his child's face?" "What do you mean?" It was Telforth's turn to look indignant. "Are you suggesting that that's why I'm marrying Rosemary—?" "He broke off, his face troubled as well as wrathful, and added: "That's not fair! Rosemary and I have known one another for years." Myrle's emotion was spent. She could only say breathlessly: "I'm sorry. I only want to know what business you have to show such an interest in my affairs? It's hardly called for, is it—?" "You seem to take a devil of an interest in mine," retorted Telforth. "Why?" They looked at one another. A slow crimson suddenly mounted in Myrle's face. Telforth's eyes were bright with his own inward revelation, dark with trouble. Myrle looked away hastily. "Hm!" said Telforth, portentously. "Why?" In chastened embarrassment they walked forward slowly together. The little word "why" echoed in their ears, blew after them, whispering in the wind...

Myrle and Telforth ran. Evelyn and the other girl dashed ahead on their horses. But by the time they had dismounted, Telforth had vaulted the wire. Rosemary's horse, lying on her and trying to rise with a broken leg, kept lifting itself and then falling back on the battered body of the girl. "Stop him!" screamed Evelyn, half crying as she stumbled hurriedly over the gate. Telforth, with some difficulty, dragged Rosemary clear. He bent over her as Myrle came to his side, and together they examined her, breathlessly, afraid of the worst. "Her heart's beating," said Telforth jerkily. "This arm is broken. . . . God knows what other damage. I'll get some kind of stretcher." He rose hastily. Evelyn was now weeping whole-heartedly. The girl Jill asked tremulously: "What shall we do with the horse?" He paused to say: "Evelyn, run up to the tennis court and tell John to bring a gun." With a white face, Telforth set off at a run towards the house; and Evelyn in a shower of tears, towards the tennis court. Myrle was left to bathe Rosemary's dusty brow with her handkerchief dipped in a nearby water-trough, while Jill stood by, lamenting: "What possessed her to rush off like that and jump the wire? Only a few minutes earlier she said to me: 'I hate jumping—I'm terrified of it, really.'" A LIFE IN THE BALANCE Myrle had no explanation to give. She did not know. Rosemary had merely followed an impulse. But in the back of Myrle's dazed mind was a conviction of guilt. It was not anything that she had done, nothing that had been spoken. Only something discovered in her heart—and it seemed as if fate, or whatever one might fancy ruled these things, had turned her mental injury of Rosemary into a real disaster. Painfully, she stared at Rosemary's still face, all its brightness dulled to a gummy clay-colour. Something clutched at her heart; she thought that Rex! Mary had stopped breathing. She leaned forward anxiously, bent her head until she felt the faint breath from Rosemary's lips fanning her cheek. "What is it?" said Jill, terrified. "Nothing, I was just afraid. She's still breathing." "Do you think she'll live?" said Jill and Myrle, sickened by the futility of the question, made no reply. In a moment Jill said in a tone of dread: "Here's Mrs. Kane coming!" Her hair wild in the wind, Mrs. Kane came running across the paddock distress in every line of her labouring figure. Myrle, rising to meet her, forgot her own affairs in a rush of pity. Mrs. Kane, panting, and leaning heavily on Myrle's arm, looked at Rosemary and nearly fell. But with a great effort, she pulled herself together, gripping Myrle's hand convulsively. "They're taking a door off for a stretcher," she gasped, struggling for breath. "They'll be down with it in a minute or two. We must get her into town, to hospital!" As she followed the stretcher across the sunny paddocks to the house, Myrle's thoughts were a weary confusion. Before the accident something had happened—something was about to be revealed. But whatever it might have been, it was as lost to her, as the promised sweetness of a dream is lost when we wake too soon. There was only Rosemary to be thought of now. While Telforth worked, and Myrle did her best to help the others, neither of them looked or spoke to the other. What might spell death for Rosemary had certainly struck their few moments of communication dead. Both had no thought but to act as if it had never been. Rosemary, still unconscious, was placed on the back of the Kanes' car. John Kane, Mr. Kane and Mrs. Kane went with her. Telforth was to follow them in his truck in which he had driven down from "Black Hill." John Kane lent him a coat as he had nothing with him but his tennis flannels. The sun still shone, the bees still drowsed over Mrs. Kane's roses; yet it was hard to believe that this same day had begun with a picnic, as the car carrying its tragedy set off slowly down the dusty road. "I want to go with you, Daddy," cried Evelyn, as Telforth prepared to leave. "I want to go to town to know what happens to Rosemary." "You can't do that, child," said Telforth. He looked anxiously at the little group of subdued friends at the gate. "I've been forgetting about her. Will one of you see she gets back to 'Black Hill'?" Half a dozen voices instantly reassured him on the point. "I don't want to go back to 'Black Hill!'" wailed Evelyn. "Mrs. Marks will take care of you," said Telforth kindly. "I don't want to be with Mrs. Marks! I want to go to town with you!" "Evelyn, please be good." "Daddy, I'm not being naughty, I must go with you!" Myrle, overbrought by the sight of Telforth's strained, unhappy face, and the obvious sincerity of Evelyn's grief, said impulsively: "I'll take her to 'Petersdown' with me. We'd be very pleased to have her there until you get back." She adopted, instinctively, the most formal tone she could contrive. Telforth looked at her then, with fate-haunted eyes; some physical reaction, for her thoughts were subdued by a sense of utter calamity, made her face darken slowly. "Will you come and stay with me, Evelyn?" she asked. "Will you go with Myrle, Evelyn?" Telforth said. Evelyn looked bewildered. "Go with Myrle then, and be good. I'll ring you the moment I get to town." Telforth got hastily into his truck, for the Kanes' car was already well ahead. Evelyn opened her mouth to protest,

Preston East Dome Makes Changes on Board of Directors

D. G. H. Wright's Slate is Approved Without Opposition.

Without even a formal counting of votes, shareholders of Preston East Dome Mines, Ltd. supported a reshuffling of the board of directors, replacing four members with new nominees, at the annual meeting, says The Northern Miner. Over 2,000,000 shares of the company's issued capital of 3,000,000 were represented at the meeting. The meeting was largely attended and it was clear that many of those present anticipated a vigorous airing of the company's affairs. Complete good humour reigned however, and the board as proposed by D. G. W. Wright, consulting engineer and former president, was elected without opposition. The reconstituted board is as follows: John B. Allen, W. H. Bouck, H. Preston Courten, Walter G. Ecclestone, Stanley N. Graham, Charles Hershman and John W. Hubbard. At a subsequent meeting of the board W. H. Bouck was re-elected president and Stanley N. Graham vice-president, and L. I. Hall, secretary. The new members of the board, Messrs. Allen, Ecclestone, Hershman and Hubbard replace H. W. Knight, former vice-president; W. B. Milner, Stuart Playfair and R. W. Briggstocke. Apart from the change in the board of directors and an illuminating property report by V. A. James, manager, the meeting was largely routine. A shareholder asked for details of the company's investment portfolio and was informed that it was chiefly confined to government bonds, together with a considerable investment in Aluminum of Canada. A resolution was also passed confirming and legalizing the acts of the directors to date and at the suggestion of D. G. H. Wright, the shareholders also reiterated their approval of the dividend policy of the company as expressed in the annual report for 1939, as follows: "Your directors have definitely settled on a policy which is founded on the premise that the earnings of a period belong to the shareholders of that period, after sufficient reserve has been established to sustain the company in its proposed scale of operations, and ensure uninterrupted dividend payments, believing that the matter of investment, beyond the safeguards mentioned, can safely be left to the individual shareholder." In proposing the reconstituted board of directors Mr. Wright stated that as mentioned in his circular asking for proxies, it was his desire to strengthen the board in accordance with the concept of authorities who disagree with the principle of brokers holding directorships, but his main concern was that he had noted a growing loss of proprietorship on the board, and he felt that it was desirable that the ownership of a larger number of shares should be represented.

Care Taken in Choice of Government Officials

An amusing proof of the "care" with which government bureau men are chosen is given in the following article from "The Printed Word," but apparently there is a Sassenach in the office of Johnston, Everson and Charlesworth, the Public Relations specialists, who issue "The Printed Word." The Sassenach villainy will be noted in the reading:— Gordon Highlanders A glance through the Directory of the War-time Prices and Trade Board is convincing proof of the care with which directors and administrators are chosen for the various divisions. Mr. Short and Mr. Close are in the rationing section, as is quite fitting, Gallipoli is hooked up with farm machinery, naturally. Mr. Scythe, however, is not with the farm section, but cutting down waste in Cotton Waste under the textiles heading. Mr. Weaver is closely connected with full fashioned hosiery, and Mr. Shoemaker is in the leather division. There's a Stoker in the coal department, and

Short Business Meeting of French Federation

The monthly meeting of the French Federation was conducted on Sunday afternoon at the parish hall of St. Anthony's Cathedral. The meeting was a short one; the only plans being made were for a card party to be held on Sunday at the parish hall. A great deal of knitting was turned in at the meeting. All these pieces were done during the month by the members. The meeting was brought to a close, the next to be held on Sunday, May 2nd. Blairmore Enterprise:— The fellow who stops advertising to save money is like the chap who stopped the clock to save time.

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Did he, in any case, feel so much moved as she did? Men didn't feel things so much as women. "Man's love is man's life a thing apart." To Myrle it was like a great light flashing up and illuminating her whole existence—only to be put out again, instantly, leaving the darkness deeper than before. "Will they take Rosemary to hospital?" Evelyn asked, wily. "Yes, I, expect so," said Myrle. "They'll take her to the doctor at Waihi, and expect he'll send her on to Christchurch to the hospital there." "Will Daddy come back from Waihi straight away if they don't send Rosemary to Christchurch?" "I suppose he might." If Rosemary died, he might, thought Myrle. She might die on the way. Myrle bit her lip, fearing the wish that might come to her—that Rosemary would die! "Well, then, he'll go back to 'Black Hill,' and I won't be there! I ought to go back to 'Black Hill,'" said Evelyn, puckering her face. "But I told your Daddy I would look after you," Myrle objected. "I expect he would think I ought to do it." Evelyn's look was dark with dislike, and she stopped on the path. "I'd rather go back to 'Black Hill' in case he comes." Myrle was nonplussed. "I think it would be better to come to 'Petersdown' now we're nearly there," she urged. Evelyn stood still, however, and looked sullenly back down the drive. "Daddy will know you're with us and he'll naturally come to 'Petersdown' first," said Myrle. "That, apparently, was unanswerable, and Evelyn continued reluctantly towards 'Petersdown.'" Myrle sighed inwardly. It was no alleviation of the unhappy situation that the child should be so difficult. "Would she always dislike me?" thought Myrle. "Would she, if—?" She interrupted her own thought roughly. "If I were married to Telforth," the thought; would have been. It was too vain, too hopeless, too guilty to be allowed. They came to the pine plantation which sheltered the homestead. The river bed lay before them, the broom-yellow cliffs, the vast landscape of hills and mountains under the light-filled sky. The afternoon sun softened the golden land with long shadows, the river drifted like a strand of light. The loveliness about her suddenly seized on Myrle's imagination as it had never done before. She had hated it too long ago, but now its beauty was too much, too great to bear! "I shall have to go away," she said to herself in agony. And at that she suddenly remembered Rex. She had almost forgotten him. Poor Rex, how could she? How utterly disloyal and beastly! (To be Continued)

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